

# REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

August 2012

## 2012 Atlanta Region Population

### POPULATION GROWTH REMAINS SLUGGISH

ARC estimates that the 10-county Atlanta region added 37,200 new residents between April 1, 2011 and April 1, 2012. This growth remains significantly slower than what the Atlanta region is accustomed to, as migration nationwide remains muted and the national economy is slow to recover.

In the last two years combined (since 2010), the region added approximately 72,000 new residents. To put this into perspective, during the fast-growing 2000 decade, the Atlanta region was routinely adding 100,000 new residents.

The Atlanta region's slowdown is directly attributable to the national economy. During weak economic periods, people don't move as much because, firstly, job opportunities are slim, thus people aren't moving

to take new jobs. Secondly, with the housing market in such disarray, it is hard to sell a house, which tends to keep people in the same place.

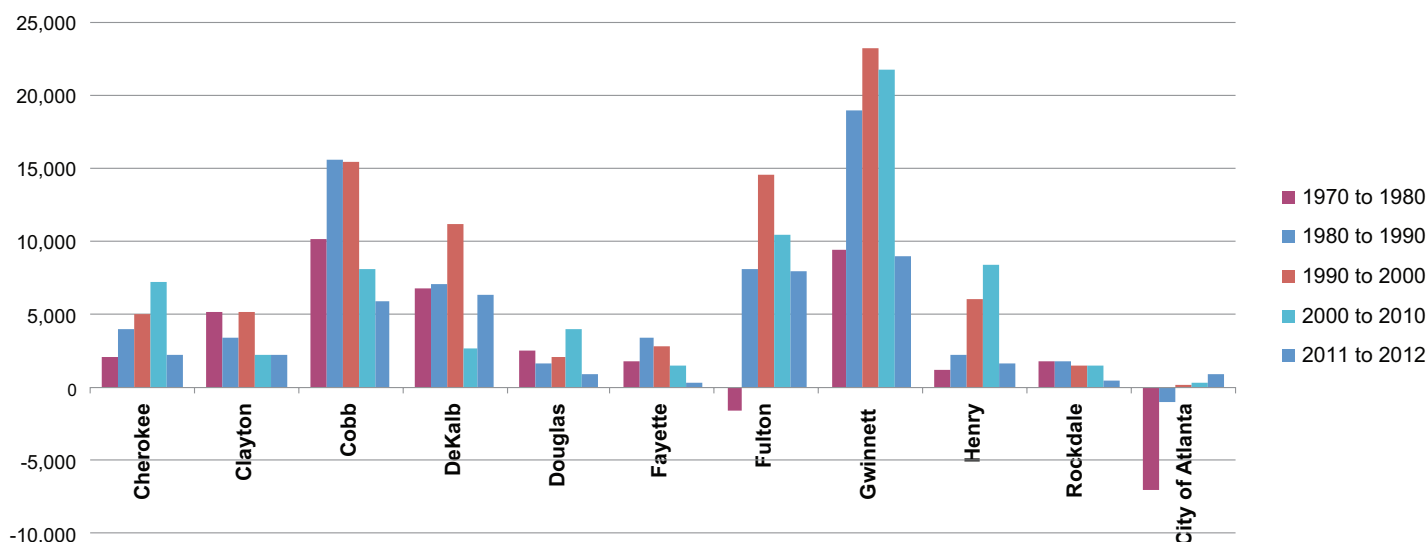
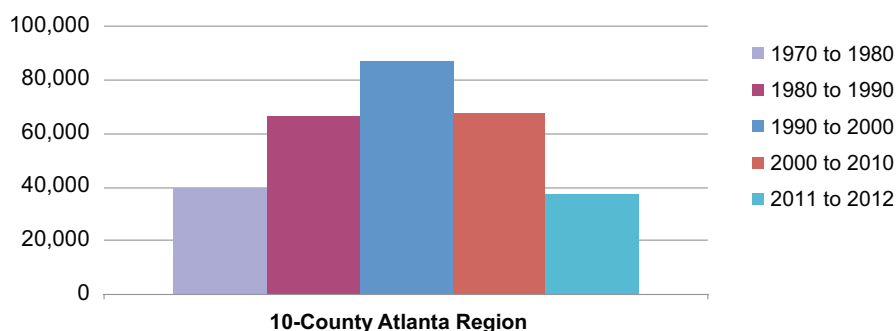
The 10-county Atlanta region is now home to 4,179,500 people, a population that is still larger than 24 states, according to the latest Census figures.

### CENSUS DATA FOR METRO ATLANTA

Still, according to the 2010 Census, metro Atlanta (28 counties) ranked third in overall growth in the nation between 2000 and 2010, adding more than one million people. Only Dallas and Houston added more population during that period.

While the region's growth rate has tapered off dramatically, metro Atlanta still ranked seventh in the nation in total population growth between 2010 and 2011, according to the latest estimates from the U.S. Census, adding almost 73,000 new residents in 28 counties.

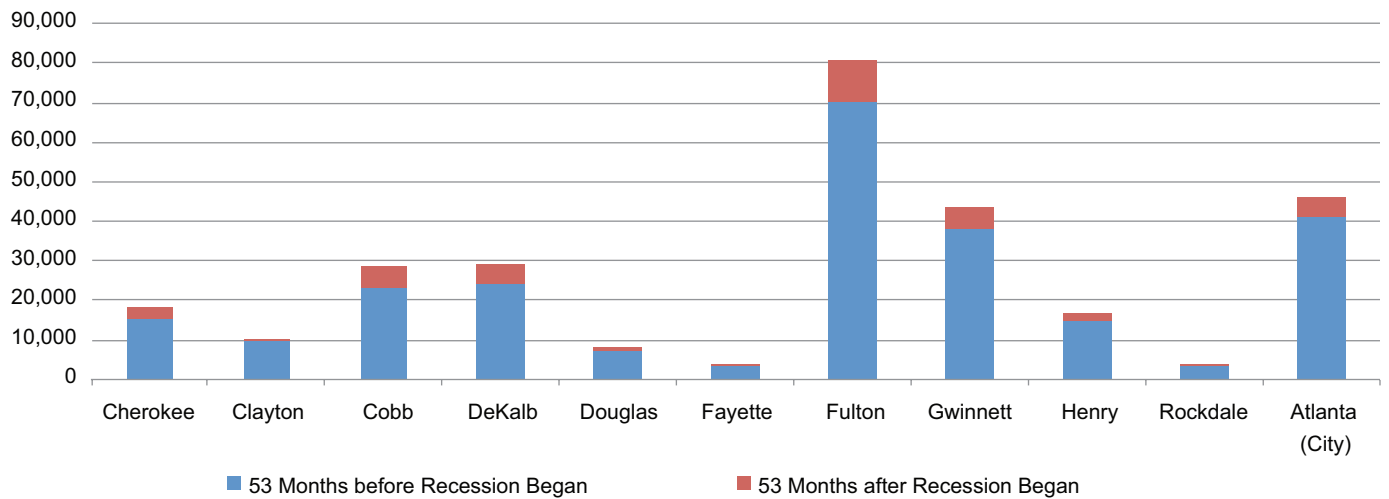
Chart 1 – Average Annual Population Growth by Decade 1970-2012



Source: Atlanta Regional Commission

# 2012 Atlanta Region Population

Chart 2 – Building Permits Before & After (December 2007)



Source: State of the Cities Data System

## VERY LITTLE NEW BUILDING ACTIVITY

One key indicator of population growth is new housing construction, of which there has been very little since the recession officially began in December of 2007. As Chart 2 shows, building permit activity has slowed to a trickle since the beginning of the 2007 recession, especially when compared to the comparable time period prior to the recession.

almost every other county in the region, is well below the annual average growth experienced in the 1990s and 2000s, when Gwinnett averaged approximately 22,000 new residents each year.

Fulton County added 7,900 new residents last year, ranking second in the 10-county region. Next are DeKalb (+6,300) and Cobb (+5,900).

## GWINNETT COUNTY LED REGION IN GROWTH

Gwinnett County, which has long been a leader among metro Atlanta counties in population growth, once again led the region in growth last year (2011-2012), adding 9,000 new residents. This growth, as in

## POPULATION SLOWING IN EVERY COUNTY

Between 1990 and 2010, the 10-county region added an average of 77,500 new residents each year, for a total of almost 1.6 million people in that 20-year time frame. As can be seen in Table 1, every county in the region is well below that historic pace.

Table 1 – Atlanta Region Population 1970-2012

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2011	2012	Average Annual Change 2010-2012	Average Annual Change 1990-2010
Atlanta Region	1,500,823	1,896,182	2,557,800	3,429,379	4,107,750	4,142,300	4,179,500	35,875	77,498
Cherokee	31,059	51,699	91,000	141,903	214,346	218,500	220,800	3,227	6,167
Clayton	98,126	150,357	184,100	236,517	259,424	260,000	262,300	1,438	3,766
Cobb	196,793	297,718	453,400	607,751	688,078	693,600	699,500	5,711	11,734
DeKalb	415,387	483,024	553,800	665,865	691,893	694,400	700,700	4,404	6,905
Douglas	28,659	54,573	71,700	92,174	132,403	133,000	133,900	749	3,035
Fayette	11,364	29,043	62,800	91,263	106,567	107,100	107,500	467	2,188
Fulton	605,210	589,904	670,800	816,006	920,581	928,200	936,100	7,760	12,489
Gwinnett	72,349	166,808	356,500	588,448	805,321	814,100	823,100	8,890	22,441
Henry	23,724	36,309	59,200	119,341	203,922	207,800	209,500	2,789	7,236
Rockdale	18,152	36,747	54,500	70,111	85,215	85,600	86,100	443	1,536
City of Atlanta	495,039	424,922	415,200	416,474	420,003	420,700	421,600	799	240

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission

For more information on these issues or to suggest new subjects, please email [mcarnathan@atlantaregional.com](mailto:mcarnathan@atlantaregional.com).

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regional impact + local relevance